

Message Text

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15

ACTION EUR-25

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INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

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USNMR SHAPE

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TAGS: PINT, BE

SUBJECT: IMPROVED PROSPECTS FOR EARLY ENLARGEMENT OF BELGIAN
GOVERNMENT

REF: BRUSSELS 3201

USNMR SHAPE FOR POLAD

1. SUMMARY. WE ARE LIKELY TO KNOW BEFORE MID-JUNE WHETHER
TINDEMANS WILL BE ABLE BEFORE THE SUMMER RECESS TO EXPAND HIS
SOCIAL CHRISTIAN/LIBERAL PARTY MINORITY GOVERNMENT TO INCLUDE ONE
OR MORE OF THE FEDERALIST/LINGUISTIC PARTIES. IF EXPANDED ONLY
BY THE PARTICIPATION OF THE WALLONIAN RALLY (RW) LED BY FRANCOIS
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PERIN, THE TINDEMANS GOVERNMENT WILL ACQUIRE A CLEAR (BUT NOT

ESPECIALLY STABLE) PARLIAMENTARY MAJORITY. PARTICIPATION BY THE FLEMISH VOLKSUNIE AND THE BRUSSELS FRANCOPHONE FRONT WILL BE NECESSARY IF THE GOVERNMENT IS TO HAVE THE TWO-THIRDS MAJORITY NEEDED FOR CARRYING OUR REGIONALIZATION. OUR SOURCES INDICATE THAT AN IMPORTANT REMAINING BARRIER TO RW PARTICIPATION IS HORSE TRADING OVER MINISTERIAL APPOINTMENTS. ANY ENLARGEMENT WOULD BE SIGNIFICANT IN SIGNALING AN IMPROVED ATMOSPHERE FOR SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS TOWARDS RESOLVING BELGIUM'S LINGUISTIC/ COMMUNAL PROBLEMS. END SUMMARY.

2. OPTIONS. THE FLEMISH SOCIAL CHRISTIAN PREMIER HAS BEEN HIGHLY ACTIVE IN RECENT WEEKS CONDUCTING NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE LINGUISTIC/FEDERALIST PARTIES (RW, FDF, VU) AND HIS OWN GOVERNMENT PARTIES (PSC/CVP, PLP, PVV) ON CONDITIONS FOR PARTICIPATION BY ONE OR MORE OF THE LINGUISTIC PARTIES IN THE GOVERNMENT. THE COMPLEXITY OF THE OPERATION AND THE INTENSITY OF TINDEMANS' CONCENTRATION HAVE LED BELGIAN OBSERVERS TO COMPARE HIS EFFORTS IN PERSPECTIVE, TO THOSE OF SECRETARY KISSINGER IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

3. THE POSSIBLE OUTCOMES INCLUDE:

- RW TO ENTER GOVERNMENT IN JUNE AND THE OTHER LINGUISTIC PARTIES TO ENTER IN THE FALL;

- THREE LINGUISTIC PARTIES TO ENTER IN JUNE;

- RW AND VU TO JOIN THE GOVERNMENT SOON BUT NOT THE FDF.

THE SECOND ALTERNATIVE APPEARS SLIGHTLY IN THE LEAD AT THE MOMENT.

4. BRUSSELS PROBLEM. THE CHEF PROBLEM OF SUBSTANCE HAS BEEN THE PERENNIAL ISSUE OF THE SIZE AND POWER OF BRUSSELS AS ONE OF THE THREE REGIONS OF BELGIUM. ONE REGIME FOR ITS DELMINATIONS AND POWERE COUND MEAN JOINT PREDOMINANCE BY WALLONIA AND BRUSSELS OVER FLANDERS. ANOTHER REGIME COULD LEAVE FLANDERS WITH THE PREDOMINANCE IT DESERVES ON THE BASIS OF POPULATION AND ECONOMIC STRENGTH, BUT BE UNDECOCRATICALLY RESTRICTIVE OF THE RIGHTS (E.G. CHOICE OF LANGUAGE OF SCHOOLING) OF INHABITANTS OF THE BRUSSELS REGION. THE ISSUE IS MADE MORE DIFFICULT ALSO BY TNE NON-COINCIDEONE OF THE BOARDERS OF ECOMOMIC AND LINGUISTIC REGIONS. IN ANY EVENT, IT IS LESS DIFFICULT FOR REPRESENTATIVES OF WALLONIA AND OF FLANDERS TO ENVISAGE COMPROMISES THAN IT IS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FOR REPRESENTATIVES OF FRENCH SPEAKING BRUSSELS (FDF).

5. MINISTERIAL CONSIDERATIONS. CHARGE WAS ADVISED MAY 30 BY LIBERAL PARTY MINISTER FOR MIDDLE CLASSES LOUIS OLIVIER THAT UNDERLYING CURRENT NEGOTIATIONS IS HEAVY IN-FIGHTING OVER REALLOCATING APPOINTMENTS AS MINISTER OR SECRETARY OF STATE. SINCE GOVERNMENT MUST BE LINGUISTICALLY BALANCED, ADDITION OR REPLACEMENT OF MINISTERS IS DELICATE OPERATION.

6. SOCIALIST PARTY REACTION. IN THE FACE OF IMPROVED PROSPECTS FOR AGREEMENT AMONG THE LINGUISTIC PARTIES, THE SOCIALIST PARTY IS THREATENED WITH EVER-DEEPENING ISOLATION AND IMPOTENCE. ABOUT ALL THE SOCIALISTS CAN DO IS TO SNIPE AT THE NEGOTIATING PARTIES AND TO LABEL CONCESSIONS BY ANY OF THEM AS "SELLING OUT."BOOCHEVER

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